What is claimed is:

1. A method in an interactive television system for mitigating interruptions during television viewing, the method comprising:

receiving a television signal from a signal source;

displaying the television signal;

detecting an incoming telephone call at the interactive television system; and

automatically buffering the television signal for subsequent playback after the telephone call is terminated.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein detecting comprises detecting an incoming telephone call on a telephone line coupled to the interactive television system.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein detecting an incoming telephone call on a telephone line comprises detecting a ring signal on the telephone line.

4. The method of claim 1, wherein detecting an incoming telephone call comprises detecting an incoming Internet-based telephone call.

5. The method of claim 4, wherein the Internet-based telephone call comprises a Voice-over-IP (VoIP) call.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein the television signal is automatically buffered in response to detecting the incoming telephone call.

7. The method of claim 1, wherein the television signal is automatically buffered in response to a user answering the telephone call.

8. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

detecting a user answering the telephone call; and

in response to detecting the telephone call being terminated, playing back the television signal being buffered from a point in time at which the telephone call was detected.

9. The method of claim 8, wherein detecting a user answering the telephone call comprises detecting an off-the-hook condition on a telephone line coupled to the interactive television system.

10. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

detecting a user answering the telephone call; and

in response to detecting the call being terminated, playing back the television signal being buffered from a point in time at which the telephone call was answered.

11. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

in response to a user command, playing back the television signal being buffered while the telephone call is in progress.

12. The method of claim 1, wherein buffering comprises:

encoding the television signal; and

storing the encoded television signal in a storage device.

13. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

in response to the telephone call being terminated, automatically playing back the television signal being buffered; and

during automatic playback of the buffered television signal, resuming display of a real-time television signal from the signal source in response to a user command.

14. The method of claim 13, wherein resuming comprises:

playing back the buffered television signal at a modified rate in response to a transport control.

15. A method in an interactive television system for mitigating interruptions during television viewing, the method comprising:

receiving a television signal from a signal source;

displaying the television signal;

detecting an outgoing telephone call at the interactive television system; and

automatically buffering the television signal for subsequent playback after the telephone call is terminated.

16. The method of claim 15, wherein detecting an outgoing telephone call comprises detecting an off-the-hook condition on a telephone line coupled to the interactive television system.

17. The method of claim 15, wherein detecting an outgoing telephone call comprises detecting an outgoing Internet-based telephone call.

18. The method of claim 17, wherein the outgoing Internet-based telephone call comprises a Voice-over-IP (VoIP) call.

19. The method of claim 15, further comprising:

in response to detecting the telephone call being terminated, playing back the television signal being buffered from a point in time at which the outgoing telephone call was detected.

20. The method of claim 1, wherein buffering comprises:

encoding the television signal; and

storing the encoded television signal in a storage device.

21. An interactive television system for mitigating interruptions during television viewing, the system comprising:

a tuner that receives a television signal from a signal source;

a video controller that displays the television signal on a display device;

a detection component that detects an incoming telephone call at the interactive television system; and

a buffering component that automatically buffers the television signal for subsequent playback after the telephone call is terminated.

22. The system of claim 21, wherein the interactive television system is coupled to a telephone line, and wherein the detection component detects an incoming telephone call on the telephone line.

23. The system of claim 22, wherein the detection component comprises a ring detector that detects a ring signal on the telephone line.

24. The system of claim 22, wherein the detection component comprises an off-the-hook detector that detects an off-the-hook condition on the telephone line.

25. The system of claim 21, wherein the detection component detects an Internet-based telephone call.

26. The system of claim 25, wherein the Internet-based telephone call comprises a Voice-over-IP (VoIP) call.

27. The system of claim 21, wherein the buffering component automatically buffers the television signal in response to detecting the incoming telephone call.

28. The system of claim 21, wherein the buffering component automatically buffers the television signal in response to a user answering the telephone call.

29. The system of claim 21, wherein the detection component detects a user answering the telephone call, the system further comprising:

a playback component that, in response to detecting the telephone call being terminated, plays back the television signal being buffered from a point in time at which the telephone call was detected.

30. The system of claim 21, wherein the detection component detects a user answering the telephone call, the system further comprising:

a playback component that, in response to detecting the telephone call being terminated, plays back the television signal being buffered from a point in time at which the telephone call was answered.

31. The system of claim 21, further comprising:

a playback component that, in response to a user command, plays back the television signal being buffered while the telephone call is in progress.

32. The system of claim 21, wherein the buffering component comprises:

an encoder that encodes the television signal; and

a storage device that stores the encoded television signal.

33. The system of claim 21, further comprising:

a playback component that automatically plays back the television signal being buffered in response to the telephone call being terminated and, during automatic playback of the buffered television signal, resumes display of a real-time television signal from the signal source in response to a user command.

34. The system of claim 33, wherein the playback component plays back the buffered television signal at a modified rate in response to a transport control.

35. An interactive television system for mitigating interruptions during television viewing, the system comprising:

a tuner that receives a television signal from a signal source;

a video controller that displays the television signal on a display device;

a detection component that detects an outgoing telephone call at the interactive television system; and

a buffering component that automatically buffers the television signal for subsequent playback after the telephone call is terminated.

36. The system of claim 35, wherein the interactive television system is coupled to a telephone line, and wherein the detection component comprises an off-the-hook detector that detects an off-the-hook condition on the telephone line.

37. The system of claim 35, wherein the detection component detects an outgoing Internet-based telephone call.

38. The system of claim 37, wherein the outgoing Internet-based telephone call comprises a Voice-over-IP (VoIP) call.

39. The system of claim 35, further comprising:

a playback component that, in response to detecting the telephone call being terminated, plays back the television signal being buffered from a point in time at which the outgoing telephone call was detected.

40. The system of claim 21, wherein the buffering component comprises:

an encoder that encodes the television signal; and

a storage device that stores the encoded television signal.

41. A method in an interactive television system for mitigating interruptions during television viewing, the method comprising:

receiving a television signal from a signal source;

displaying the television signal on a television;

detecting an incoming telephone call on a telephone line coupled to the interactive television system;

automatically buffering the television signal;

detecting a user answering the telephone call; and

in response to the telephone call being terminated, playing back the television signal being buffered.

42. An interactive television system for mitigating interruptions during television viewing, the system comprising:

a tuner that receives a television signal from a signal source;

a video controller that displays the television signal on a television;

a detection component that detects an incoming telephone call on a telephone line coupled to the interactive television system;

a buffering component that automatically buffers the television signal; and

a playback component that, in response to the telephone call being terminated, automatically plays back the television signal being buffered.

43. An interactive television system for mitigating interruptions during television viewing, the system comprising:

means for receiving a television signal from a signal source;

means for displaying the television signal;

means for detecting an incoming telephone call at the interactive television system; and

means for automatically buffering the television signal for subsequent playback after the telephone call is terminated.